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August 2011



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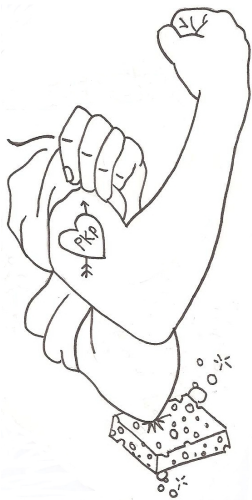


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The Old Hag

When I am about to awake, the limbs and trunk of my body refuse to move. My eyelids flit up and down, but my eyes won't stay open. Maybe I manage to lift my head a bit, but it weighs an impossible ton of bricks. I need to scream, but my voice can only manage muted moans. A sense of impending capture and/or death go along with all this, so I reeeeeeally need to lift my body and *go*. Impossible. I'm paralyzed.

Death is not at hand, but the paralysis is quite real. And I am far from the only poor sleeper to suffer it. "Sleep paralysis," lasting seconds or minutes, is accompanied by terror, panic, and hallucinations. Vivid horror.

Some folklore call this experience "The Old Hag." The Old Hag might be a mare, witch, or damned woman who flies around at night resting here and there on rib cages. Her weight presses hard, pins you down, and renders you paralyzed. Tag this feeling catalepsy, narcolepsy, hypnogogic hallucinations, evil jinns, science fiction, alien abductions, lucid dreams, ghouls, haunts, and *The Nightmare* by Henri Fuseli. There are plenty of tips on "sleep hygiene" out there, and in my experience they work. Don't despair. (*Patricia Kirkpatrick*)



Quiz Corner: Title Town, USA

BY ADAM VILLANI

When the Bruins hoisted the Stanley Cup in June, Boston became "Title Town, USA," having won championships in all four top-level professional sports leagues (the NHL, NFL, NBA, and MLB) within the span of less than a decade. The Patriots won Super Bowl XXXIX in February 2005, the Red Sox won in 2007, and the Celtics won in 2008.

Five other American cities have achieved this distinction, but they all took longer than Boston—some of them, much longer. Can you identify these other US Title Towns below by matching them with the shortest span over which they won championships in all four leagues?

For clues, I have included the leagues and years that began and ended the span. (For example, Boston (A) is #1.)

- A. Boston

B. Chicago

C. Detroit

D. Los Angeles/Anaheim

E. New York/Northern New Jersey

F. Philadelphia

1. 6 years, 129 days (NFL 2005–NHL 2011)

2. 11 years, 133 days (NFL 1969–NHL 1980)

3. 19 years, 300 days (NFL 1960–MLB 1980)

4. 23 years, 135 days (NFL 1984–NHL 2007)

5. 34 years, 60 days (NHL 1955–NBA 1989)

6. 73 years, 210 days (MLB 1917–NBA 1991)

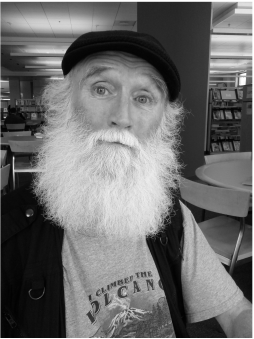
(Note that I am using Census-defined metro areas, not strict city limits. If a city has multiple teams in a league, only one of those teams needs to win within the span to qualify. Teams that have moved or folded still count for the city where they won. Years are listed by the year in which the championship was actually won, so Super Bowl years represent championships for the previous year's regular season.)

Quizmaster Adam Villani won Ben Stein's Money, but lost to all-time champion Ken Jennings at Jeopardy!

Beards of Worcester



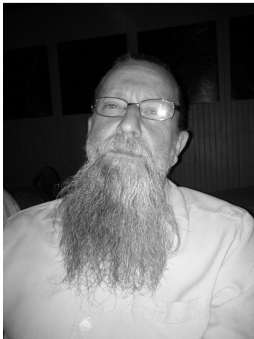
Jude Fernando



Joe Finneral



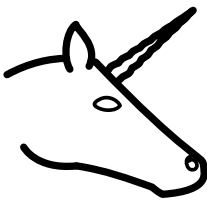
Tom Lewis



Jono O'Sullivan

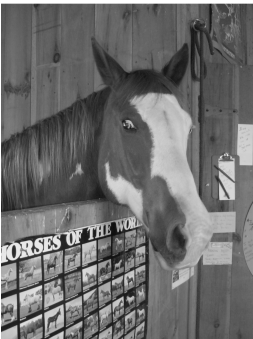


Sigmund Freud



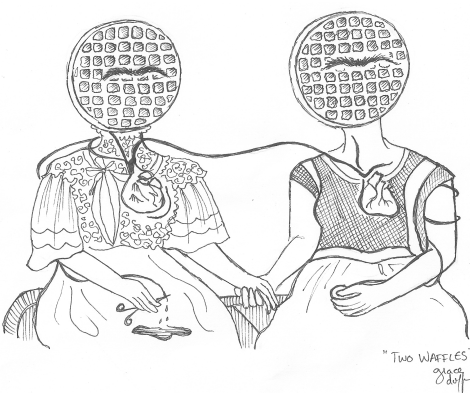


Don't Marry Ethel Merman
This is the abiding lesson of Ernest Borgnine's life. Sure, the idea of waking up every morning next to someone who can sing "There's No Business Like Show Business" into your ear sounds like a great idea. But waking up with a hangover next to a woman who has no volume control gets old pretty quick.
If you do marry Ethel Merman, don't be like Ernest Borgnine and write in your autobiography, "Maybe I thought I was marrying Rosemary Clooney." (Nicole Apostola)



Pony Report
The ponies are alright. Nature is in perfect balance, even this pony hierarchy. Val has taken the lead. They say the alpha position is secured quickly. In a matter of hours, even. But is there one, very moment in time that the change peaks? Indeed I witnessed rising and falling action, just as in any story. But my sensitivity did not pick up on the climactic moment. Perhaps a horse whisperer's could. Bailey, the old alpha, died in a field on a warm fall day. Her family circled around her. Eleven hundred pounds lying in the thick, tall grass that fed her for thirty-one long years. A horse's eye. A moment in time. SD tells me the film *The Tree of Life* is all about the beauty of a moment. I must see this movie. Good-bye Bailey. (PKP)

- Quiz Answers**
A. (Boston) 1
B. (Chicago) 6
C. (Detroit) 5
D. (L.A.) 4
E. (New York) 2
F. (Philadelphia) 3



She is cognizant of those two waffles that live symbiotically within her, juxtaposed and yet marinating in the existence of each other. It is as though one can see people a little deeper than the other, into and out of the starstuff we are all made of. A hush comes over both waffles as they lay down their glucose molecules, silent and in awe of the primordial pulse of an artery that runs from the Holiest of places all the way up to her heart. (Sarah Herold)

Recent Controversial Worcester City Council Votes

BY MIKE BENEDETTI

The Worcester City Council usually votes unanimously—any controversial stuff is sent to subcommittees, where it’s either turned into something broadly acceptable or buried.

Here’s a list of the positions current City Councilors took on controversial votes. Some of the spaces are blank, either because that City Councilor wasn’t serving when the vote was taken, or was absent that day.

	Clancy	Eddy	Germain	Haller	Lukes	O'Brien	Palmieri	Petty	Rushton	Smith	Toomey
1. Affirm religious freedom	y			y	y		y	y	y		
2. Pay raise	y			y	N		N	y	y	y	
3. Hot dog vendor crackdown	y	y	N	y	y		y	y	N	N	N
4. Condemn Arizona’s immigration law	N	N	y	N	N	y	N	N	y	y	N
5. Discourage pit bulls	y	y	N	y	y	N	y	y	y	y	y
6. Traffic surveillance cameras	y	y	y	y	y	y	N	y	N		y

- City Council reaffirmed its commitment to religious freedom.* September 20, 2005. This resolution was a response to then-Governor Romney’s suggestion that mosques be wiretapped. Only then-Councilor Juan Gomez voted against it, saying it had nothing to do with running the city.
- Raise pay to \$34,000 for the Mayor and \$29,000 for other Councilors.* December 19, 2006. This was an 84% pay raise, as the salary had not increased since 1987! Various Councilors refused to take the raise in following years.
- Additional regulation on hawkers/peddlers and street vendors.* August 8, 2008. After a couple restaurants complained that hot dog vendors were taking their business (!), the City Council added various new restrictions on street vendors.
- Write letters of complaint or divest from Arizona because of their new immigration law.* May 11, 2010. This turned into a mess of parliamentary procedure. The “yes votes” noted in the chart above are those who sponsored the failed measures. Those opposing the condemnation said it was because it had nothing to do with running the city. Arizona changed the wording of their bill after this item was proposed but before the vote.
- Additional regulations on pit bulls and similar dogs.* September 7, 2010. This ordinance was widely criticized by animal lovers, including the MSPCA. Many amendments were added after the main vote.
- Traffic surveillance cameras.* August 9, 2011. These would detect and photograph people running red lights; after the evidence was reviewed by police, the motorist would be sent a ticket. These would require a change in state law; the Council voted to request that change.

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HAPPINESS PONY
Income Statement
July 2011

Revenue	
Donations from editors	\$118.73
Ad sales	\$0.00
Other donations	\$0.00
Expenses	
500 copies	\$117.62
Test copies	\$1.11
Net Income	
	\$0.00

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